

NSRE 2000

**U.S.D.A. Forest Service &
N.O.A.A.**

SUMMARY REPORT #3 FROM THE:

**NATIONAL SURVEY ON RECREATION AND THE
ENVIRONMENT (NSRE 2000)**

**(Versions 1 to 5 with Sample Frequencies
And Weighted Population Estimates)**

**THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF OUR NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT**

INTRODUCTION

This summary is the third in a series that provides sample frequencies and weighted population estimates from the 1999-2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE 2000). The *NSRE 2000*, in general, was conducted to discover and describe: (1) participation by Americans in outdoor recreation activities, (2) opinions concerning management of both public and private forests and grasslands, (3) the importance and value of our natural environment, (3) uses and values of wildlife and wilderness, (4) people's lifestyles, and (5) recreational trips people take away from home. The *NSRE 2000* data will be used by a variety of public and private organizations for both management and research purposes.

Version's one to five had a total target sample of 22,700 Americans above the age of 16. The average length of interviews for these surveys was 17 minutes. Data was collected from July 1999 through October 2000. A total of 22, 847 useable interviews were completed.

This summary, specifically, provides sample frequencies and weighted estimates from versions two and four of the *NSRE 2000* regarding American's opinions and attitudes regarding the importance and value of our natural environment. Data from just two versions of the *NSRE 2000* are used because the environmental modules have only been included in these versions to date. Therefore the frequencies and percentages presented in this summary are based upon a total of 15,675 completed interviews.

Data from versions one to five of the *NSRE 2000* were examined for differences in demographic profiles between those surveyed and the overall population of the country. Differences were found to warrant weighting the data. The weighting strategy used a combination of multi-variate and multiplicative weights accounting for age, race, sex, education, and urban/rural differences. This weighting adjustment assures better estimates of recreation participation and trends across the general population. Subsequently, the population estimates provided in this report are from weighted sample frequencies and percentages. Furthermore, the population estimates are based upon the noninstitutionalized civilian population. Estimates of the noninstitutionalized civilian population (207.3 million) differ from the civilian population estimates (212.4 million) in that they exclude persons residing in institutions, such as nursing homes, prisons, mental hospitals or correctional facilities. People residing in such institutions are not part of the *NSRE*'s telephone sample, hence they are not contacted for interviews or used in the generation of population estimates.

Another source of bias comes from language barriers and the exclusion of non-English speaking US residents. According to the 1990 Census, 10.3% of the U.S. population is Hispanic. For the non-English speaking segment of the Hispanic population, the *NSRE 2000* is being conducted in Spanish. The most difficult part of this process is getting the translation generic enough for overall comprehension by all the various Hispanic dialects. Please note that other non-English speaking U.S. residents are excluded from the *NSRE 2000* survey. The complexity of translation and interviewing process make it cost prohibitive to conduct multi-lingual interviews.

**AMERICAN ATTITUDES & VALUES OF OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:
NSRE 2000 Summary (Versions 1 to 5)
(With Sample Frequencies and Weighted Population Estimates)**

The emphasis of this summary is on the importance and value of our natural environment by a sample of Americans. In this summary, weighted sample frequencies and percentages for each outdoor recreation activity incorporated in the *NSRE 2000* to date are provided. (*Please note population percentages and numbers in all tables were generated from weighted data, and rounded to the nearest decimal point).

NSRE 2000 Survey

Importance and Value of Our Natural Environment

Next we would like to ask your opinions about the environment.

ENV1A1

First, I am going to read 5 issues.

Please tell me which one of these issues most concerns you.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Reducing the public debt	1279	8.2	17.0
2. Reducing crime	4957	31.8	65.9
3. Saving social security	3382	21.7	44.9
4. Protecting and improving the natural environment	2720	17.5	36.3
5. Reforming the health system	2908	18.7	38.8
6. Don't know	331	2.1	4.4

ENV1B1 After (your chief concern), which one next most concerns you?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in millions</u>
1.Reducing the public debt	1479	9.7	20.1
2.Reducing crime	3485	22.9	47.5
3. Saving social security	3097	20.4	42.3
4. Protecting and improving the natural environment	3453	22.7	47.1
5. Reforming the health system	3485	22.9	47.0
6. Don't know	207	1.4	2.9

ENV2 We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. Do you think we're spending too much, too little or about the right amount of money on protecting the environment?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in millions</u>
1. Too much	1219	7.8	16.2
2. Too little	7980	51.1	105.9
3. About the right amount	4101	26.3	54.5
4. Don't know	2300	14.8	30.7

ENV3 There are differing opinions about our environmental protection laws and regulations. Do you think our environmental protection laws and regulations have gone too far, not far enough, or have struck about the right balance?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percentage</u>	<u>*Number in millions</u>
1. Too far	1898	12.2	25.3
2. Not far enough	6368	40.8	84.6
3. About the right balance	5843	37.5	77.7
4. Don't know	1476	9.5	19.7

ENV4 The state and federal parks and forests in this country are for the benefit of current and future generations. What should be emphasized in the management of these public parks and forests?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percentage</u>	<u>*Number in millions</u>
1. Improving their natural conditions	4440	52.7	109.2
2. Developing commercial opportunities such as timber, tourism and mining	445	5.3	11.0
3. Balancing natural conditions and commercial opportunities about equally	3235	38.4	79.6
4. Don't know	308	3.6	7.5

ENV5 How satisfied are you with the level of environmental protection in your state?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percentage</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Very satisfied	1063	12.6	26.1
2. Somewhat satisfied	3847	45.5	94.3
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1102	13.1	27.2
4. Somewhat dissatisfied	1432	16.9	35.0
5. Very dissatisfied	671	7.9	16.4
6. Don't know	335	4.0	8.3

ENV6 How serious a problem do you think the amount of commercial development and traffic is in the area where you live?

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percentage</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Very serious	2129	25.2	52.2
2. Serious	1561	18.4	38.1
3. Somewhat serious	2672	31.6	65.5
4. Not at all serious	1935	22.8	47.3
5. Don't know	166	2.0	4.2

We would like your opinion on a range of environmental issues. For each issue I will read, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

ENV7A6

Human skill and resources will insure that we do not make the earth unlivable.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	1908	24.4	50.6
2. Agree	2400	30.6	63.4

3. Neither agree nor disagree	645	8.3	17.2
4. Disagree	1315	16.8	34.8
5. Strongly disagree	1071	13.7	28.4
6. Don't Know	485	6.2	12.9

ENV7B6 Humans are severely abusing the environment.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	4303	54.9	113.8
2. Agree	2164	27.6	57.2
3. Neither agree nor disagree	303	3.9	8.1
4. Disagree	554	7.0	14.5
5. Strongly disagree	350	4.5	9.3
6. Don't Know	164	2.1	4.4

ENV7C6

Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	1167	14.9	30.9
2. Agree	1963	25.0	51.8
3. Neither agree nor disagree	485	6.2	12.9
4. Disagree	1600	20.5	42.5
5. Strongly disagree	2388	30.5	63.2
6. Don't Know	225	2.9	6.0

ENV7D6 Humans were meant to rule over nature.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	1246	15.9	33.0
2. Agree	1181	15.1	31.3
3. Neither agree nor disagree	415	5.3	11.0
4. Disagree	1442	18.4	38.1
5. Strongly disagree	3256	41.6	86.2
6. Don't Know	284	3.7	7.7

ENV7E6

Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	1294	16.5	34.2
2. Agree	1955	25.0	51.8
3. Neither agree nor disagree	478	6.1	12.7
4. Disagree	1492	19.1	39.6
5. Strongly disagree	2304	29.4	60.9
6. Don't Know	304	3.9	8.1

ENV7F6

If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	3084	39.4	81.7
2. Agree	2218	28.3	58.7
3. Neither agree nor disagree	515	6.6	13.7
4. Disagree	871	11.1	23.0
5. Strongly disagree	701	9.0	18.7

6. Don't Know	440	5.6	11.6

ENV7G6 The balance of nature is delicate and easily upset.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	4466	57.0	118.2
2. Agree	1981	25.3	52.4
3. Neither agree nor disagree	263	3.4	7.0
4. Disagree	516	6.6	13.7
5. Strongly disagree	299	3.8	7.9
6. Don't Know	307	3.9	8.1

ENV7H6 The so-called "environmental crisis" has been greatly exaggerated.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	1156	14.8	30.7
2. Agree	1776	22.7	47.0
3. Neither agree nor disagree	525	6.7	13.9
4. Disagree	1794	22.9	47.5
5. Strongly disagree	2197	28.0	58.0
6. Don't Know	379	4.9	10.2

ENV7I6

We are approaching the limit to the number of people this earth can support.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	2623	33.5	69.5
2. Agree	2003	25.6	53.1
3. Neither agree nor disagree	529	6.8	14.1
4. Disagree	1096	14.0	29.0

5. Strongly disagree	992	12.7	26.3
6. Don't Know	579	7.4	15.3

ENV7J6

When humans interfere with nature, it often produces disastrous consequences.

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>*Percent</u>	<u>*Number in Millions</u>
1. Strongly agree	3897	49.8	103.2
2. Agree	2339	29.8	61.8
3. Neither agree nor disagree	374	4.8	10.0
4. Disagree	614	7.8	16.1
5. Strongly disagree	377	4.8	10.0
6. Don't Know	231	3.0	6.2